

CONSIDERATIONS HUMBLY OFFERED

To the Honourable

House of Commons,

ASSEMBLED IN

PARLIAMENT,

CONCERNING

PROHIBITING the *Exportation* of WOOLL.

I Am against an absolute or unlimited Exportation of *WOOLL* as much as any Person whatsoever, but then there ought to be found out a way for a full Consumption of it within our selves, or else,

I. *First*, Let it be considered, whether the making of such an Act of *Parliament* as shall and will inevitably occasion the *Fall* of *RENTS* of most of the *Gentlemen's* and *Free-holder's* Estates all over *England* (those of the *Inland* Counties as well as others) only to gratify Three or Four Hundred particular Persons of the *Hamborow-Company*, *East-India-Company*, &c. Let all the Members of the *Inland* Counties, and others, I say, consider, Whether such an Act can be for the General and Publick Good of the *Kingdom*?

II. Then Consider, If when the Price of our *WOOLL* was brought down from Twelve Pence a Pound to Nine Pence and Eight Pence a Pound, your *RENTS* did then fall a *Quarter* part, whether your *RENTS* will not proportionably fall, if you bring *WOOLL* from Eight Pence to Four Pence a Pound, that is half in half, (or proportionably, be it what it will ;) so as that several *Gentlemen*, who are now worth Four Hundred Pound *per Annum*, (and Twenty years ago were worth Five or Six Hundred Pound *per Annum*) in good Land, may not be worth in Two or Three Years time above Two Hundred and Fifty or Three Hundred Pound *per Annum*, and only by the fall of their *RENTS*, without any thing of bad Husbandry, but occasioned by your *Act*.

How such a general loss of the real value of our Estates should be for the common Good of the *Kingdom*, I know not, except you will say *Ireland* is in a better condition, and able to bear greater *Taxes* than *England*, because Land is as yet but of half the value there that it is here, and therefore that you would bring your Lands down to be only equal in value to those in *Ireland*.

III. Consider, Whether upon all *emergent* occasions and necessities of the *Government*, you do not constantly fly to a *Land-Tax*, as the most sure and

certain to preserve the *King* and *Kingdom* ; How can it be the Interest of *England* then to pull down and sink our own RENTS thus ? Can we (either *Landlord* or *Tenant*) bear and pay as much out of Two Hundred or Two Hundred and Fifty Pounds a Year, as we can out of Four or Five Hundred Pounds, proportionably to what it falls, it will hold, be it what it will.

When that Estate of ours which brought us in Six Hundred Pounds a Year, will now bring us in but Four Hundred Pounds a Year, and sometimes hardly that, don't we pay a *Tax* with a vengeance in the fall of our RENTS ?

IV. Consider, That if the *PARLIAMENT* do not take some care, or make some *Provision* in their *Act*, for the better *Consumption* of *WOOLL*, you must needs lower and fall the Price of all your *WOOLL* thereby.

First, We have seen and found this by *Experience*, ever since the *Prohibition*, all the time of *Charles* the II. and *James* the II. it hath continued *Falling* more and more every Year.

Secondly, It stands to *Reason*, for if any way or method of the *Vending* or *Consumption* be stopp'd or obstructed, and no other way *Substituted* in the room thereof, that shall make away with as much, it must necessarily lower the Price.

And *who* is it that gets by this lowering of the Price of *WOOLL* ? Certainly you will all say, not the *Landlord* nor the *Tenant*, no nor yet the *Carder*, the *Spinner*, nor the *Worker*, the *Clothier* nor the *Dyer*, for they are forc'd to sell their Clothes low accordingly to them that *Buy* them ; Who then ? Chiefly a few *Factors* and particular Persons of the *Hamborough-Company* and other *Companies*, who do and will beat down the Prices of our Cloth here at home, and Buy it at the lowest Rates, (nay, and under the Rate that the *Clothier* can many times well afford it) and then sell it beyond Sea at their own Rates ; and thus, *this* which the whole *Countrey* loses, they put into their own private Pockets.

Let them keep up a moderate Price for our Cloth here, and that will keep up the Price of our *WOOLL*, and then they need not fear the *Exporting* of it, For if we could have a reasonable Price for it here, without hazard, so as to pay our RENTS, none would be so foolish or mad, to venture their Necks to Transport it : But it is the necessity that is put upon them, that now enforces them to it, when the *Clothier* will or can not Buy their *WOOLL*, at such an indifferent Rate as will enable them to Pay their *Landlords*, because the cunning *BUYERS* of our Cloth endeavour still to beat down the Prices at home.

V. Therefore I inquire, and let it be Considered, in such a Case, what shall the *COUNTREY* do, or what would you have them do with the over-plus of their *WOOLL*, (who at this time have Two Years *WOOLL* lying on their hands) which our own *Clothiers* are not able or willing to Buy at such reasonable Rates as aforesaid ?

VI. Let it be considered, Whether it can be for the Interest of *England*, when we have more *WOOLL* of our own, than we can or at least do consume in Manufactures, to suffer the *Importation* of great quantities of *Irish WOOLL*, which also helps to bring down the Prices of our own ; and 'tis certain that they have all along for these many Years brought in great Quantities of *Irish WOOLL* into *London*, *Barnstable*, and other places in the *West*, which serves every jot as well as our own *WOOLL* for their use ; must not that then hinder the *Consumption* of so many Pounds of our own *WOOLL*, and that being so much cheaper than ours, bring down the Price of ours ?

VII. Let it be considered, Whether the lowness of the Price of our *WOOLL*, hath not some influence on the lowness of the price of *Corn* ? and so consequently doth affect all the Lands of *England* : It is most certain it does, which is easily demonstrated ; for when *WOOLL* is low, and bears but a small price, so that the *Tenant* cannot live and raise his RENT by that, then he turns more

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to Tillage, breaks up and sows more Land, which brings down the Price of Corn; but if WOOLL bears a good Price, then they will run more into breeding Sheep and Grasing, and so let more of their Land ly, till Corn grows so dear again, as sufficient to answer the honest Husband-man's Labour and Charge, which now it is not.

Therefore to keep up the Price of our WOOLL, is one certain way to keep up the Prices of our Corn; and how necessary that is, you are all sensible, by making so many Acts for the Exportation of it.

Thus then upon the whole, let it be duly Considered, whether it is not most advisable,

I. Either that the PARLIAMENT should set or fix, from time to time, such reasonable Price or Prices upon WOOLL, as shall be thought indifferent and convenient betwixt Buyer and Seller, Landlord and Tenant, and continue an absolute Prohibition, as now it is, for Three Years; I dare say less WOOLL will be Exported then, than hath been for many Years before, notwithstanding the late Prohibition, and that the higher the Price is put on it, the higher it will advance the Price of Corn, both which are now so low, and have been for some time, that all are sensible, Farmers are not able long to hold it at those Rates, much less pay Taxes.

II. Or that the Parliament make the Prohibition conditional, as it is for Wheat, &c. (though Bread is the staff of the Poor and all Mens Lives,) viz. when it is not above such or such a Price at the place of Exportation, or at London, (to be duly certified) then to be Exported, and not else. Nay, Further, That the Prohibition may be made absolute for Six or Seven Months in the Year, as from the First of May or June to the First of December, or more, That no WOOLL shall be Exported within those Months (upon the severest Penalties that can be invented) that so our own people shall and may have the opportunity and benefit of pre-emption if they please; and this way I conceive there will be less WOOLL openly Transported, than is now done secretly by stealth.

III. Or that the Parliament direct Work-houses to be set up in every Market-Town in England, for the working out of all our WOOLL, with such Regulations as shall be thought fit, which might be so constituted, as in some measure to ease the burthensome Parish-Charge of the Poor, which begins to grow too heavy for us to bear already in many places; or direct some other way for the Buying up, destroying or consumption of it at home by Sumptuary Laws, ordering such and such Degrees of Men and Women to wear only our Woollen Manufactures, &c

IV. Or that the Parliament give free liberty to all Persons (being our own Free-born Subjects) to Export our own Woollen Manufactures to any part or places beyond the Seas whatever; and that the several Companies be Regulated, as to the Trade in Woollen Manufactures and their Exporting our Bullion, and also as to what Goods they Import, which hinders the Consumption of our own Manufactures at home.

V. And that they Prohibit the Importation of Irish WOOLL, as strictly in all respects as they Prohibit the Exportation of our own; or else that Ireland be prevented as strictly from Exporting any of their WOOLL into France, Flanders, Holland, or any other Foreign Parts, as well as we are prevented: For there's no Reason we should impoverish our selves, and the greatest part of the Nation, to make the Irish in general Rich, or some private Persons and particular Companies of our own, to the prejudice and damage of Five Hundred times as many.

I know nothing can hardly be Proposed, which may not be attended with some Inconveniency, (and we owe most of it to the making of the unfortunate Irish Act,) but that which we ought now to consider, is, which will be the less, and the greater Inconveniency.

I know also there are two vulgar *Objections*, to this, commonly made ; but if they be thoroughly and rightly considered, are very *small*, or indeed no *Objections* at all.

Object. I. *That this will be a great loss and hinderance to the setting our own Poor at Work.*

Answer. It can be no loss at all, for whether the Price of *WOOLL* be at Ten Pence, Eight Pence, or Six Pence a Pound, the Work of the Poor is all one and the same about it, neither more nor less, nor have they more or less for it, and now much is *stolen* over, which they do not Work out at all ; which if a good Price was fixed on it, would remain here to be work'd out.

But I will make it apparent, that this is merely a bare *Pretence* in these *Objectors*, more than any thing else.

1. Then let it be considered, Why the *Hamborough-Company* send over so many *White Clothes*, to the great loss and hinderance of the *Poor Dyers* here ?

2. But if they indeed consult the good of the *Poor*, why do the *East-India Company* import so many *WROUGHT Indian Silks*, to the prejudice and hinderance of so many Thousand *Silk-Weavers* of our own ? and why do they, (or are they suffered to) Import many other such *Goods* as hinder the Sale of our own Manufactures both at home and abroad ?

3. And why do the *French Merchants* Import (~~some~~ by stealth, as well as otherwise) so great quantities of *Wrought Silks* from *France*, (and 'tis no small shame, as well as loss to the Kingdom in general, they are suffered to Import so much any ways) both to the over ballancing of their *Exporting Trade* with *France*, and to the great prejudice, damage, and impoverishing of Ten Thousand of poor *Weavers*, and others of our *Poor*, that might be employed in working and making the same *Silk Manufactures* here at home ? And thus many Thousands more of our *Poor* might be set to Work than now are by them.

Besides, if these *Objectors* were in good earnest for the good of the *Poor*, why do they not Buy up all our *WOOLL*, (and not put any for want of vent, upon a necessity of Exporting any of it) and so employ more of our *Poor* ; but instead of that, they leave a Year or Two Years *WOOLL* upon our hands, and let the *Poor* want so much Employment.

Object. II. *That then they beyond Sea, if they have our WOOLL, would make Cloth, and under-sell us at our Markets, and so we should lose the whole Manufactory.*

Answer. This *Objection* doth indeed concern such as were the first makers of the *Irish Act*, and Prohibited the bringing in of live Sheep from *Ireland* with their *WOOLL* on their backs, into *England*, whereby their *WOOLL* became our own growth ; but now it can have no weight with us, so long as they beyond Sea have had, and can have *WOOLL* from *Ireland*, which is as good as ours ; besides from *Spain*, which is better.

Therefore, so long as they have *Irish WOOLL* at a much cheaper Rate than ours, they might under-sell us, though they had not a Pound of ours. And the *Irish* (since the *Irish Act*) have set up *Woollen Manufacturies*, and can and will serve Foreign Markets cheaper than us, let us now do what we can.

Thus then, unless you, or those that make the *Objection*, can Buy up or Destroy all the *WOOLL* of the growth of *Ireland*, the *Objection* proves altogether insignificant : Certainly we ought not be so weak to destroy our selves, and let *Ireland* have liberty to advance it self, that they may make the best of their Market for their Growth, whilst we Prohibit and Retrench our own ; giving them leave to supply those Markets, that We our selves might and formerly did ; and so we wisely raise the Rents of Lands in *Ireland*, and fall our own, which certainly (one would think) cannot sure well with our right Policy, or true Wisdom for the Publick Good.

Besides, there may be such a *Toll* and *Custom* put upon all such *WOOLL*, as shall happen so to be Exported, as shall render it so dear to them beyond Sea, that they shall never be able to under-sell us at our Markets ; whereas now the Price of *WOOLL* is so low here, 'tis certain that it causes such as steal it over, to sell it so much the lower to them in *France*, than they would do, if it did bear a good price here at home.

So that, I say, it will be found by experience, the lowering the Price of *WOOLL* so much here, does certainly cause so much the more *WOOLL* to be stolen over, or Transported, notwithstanding all the Prohibitions that ever can be made.

The Conclusion of all is this, Let there be some way found out for a full Consumption at home, and then let not a lock of *WOOLL* be Exported ; otherwise, without that, it will prove unreasonable, it will fall our RENTS, and never will have the desired Effect.

All which is humbly submitted to the mature Consideration of
This Honourable HOUSE.

